

Michael J Schneider

On August 23, 2024 I was delivering mail to a mailbox on a porch on Fleek Ave in Newark, Oh when 2 dogs breached the storm door and aggressively attacked. The first bite was to my left cheek and while I was working on removing that dog from my face the second dog bit my right calf. The dogs never barked, they just charged the door and attacked. A neighbor responded and called 911 and brought me a towel. After a brief interaction with the police and EMS I was transported to LMH and then we drove ourselves to Grant Trauma Center. Surgery didn't happen until the next morning. The quarter sized hole in my cheek was repaired leaving the skin tighter on that side and 4 faint scars from the dog's top teeth. I went through 2 months of work conditioning to strengthen my leg from the bites to my calf and continue to deal with pain that radiates up into my hip.

I have mostly recovered externally and continue to put in the work to get back to as close as possible to my pre-incident condition. I was fortunate to connect with a top cosmetic surgeon and for the most part my physical scars go unnoticed. I continue to struggle with the mental ramifications of that day. I feel uneasy in busy or new places, constantly scanning rooms for exits. I have lost confidence in systems that are supposed to protect us. The dog owners were never asked if they had insurance neither by the police taking the report or by the Licking County Dog Warden. This has left us unable to pursue legal action. Lawyers are unwilling to even consider a case without this information. We were even told that we would have to go knock on the door to ask for the insurance information. The door that changed everything.

The dog owners were able to pay a fine and never had to face a judge or their victim and the dogs were never removed from the property. We've been told that the owners are compliant with the vicious dog requirements which amount to a sign, the dogs being fixed, insurance and special tags. Mail service has not resumed to the address but that doesn't help delivery drivers or the neighbors.

I have yet to return to full duty and continue to see a counselor regularly to deal with the remnants of that day. I struggle with anxiety, depression and PTSD, conditions that I did not experience before that day. We suffered financially, lost wages, lost overtime and a new cell phone. I keep my phone on the front strap of my mail satchel and it proved to be impossible to clean blood and tissue from the charging port. What we lost most that day was peace. I struggle to get a full night's sleep and anxiety leads to irritability.

